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ABSTRACT

This publication presents a brief overview and discussion of the Educational Leadership Appraisal (ELA) system, which was developed for use in Nova University's National Ed.D. Program by Education Research Corporation. ELA is a performance-based procedure for observing and assessing leadership behavior that evaluates an individual's potential for exercising leadership in an administrative position within a school system. Each individual is appraised along 23 leadership dimensions, which are grouped into the broad categories of management and organization, communication, problem-solving, task orientation, and interpersonal qualities. (JG)

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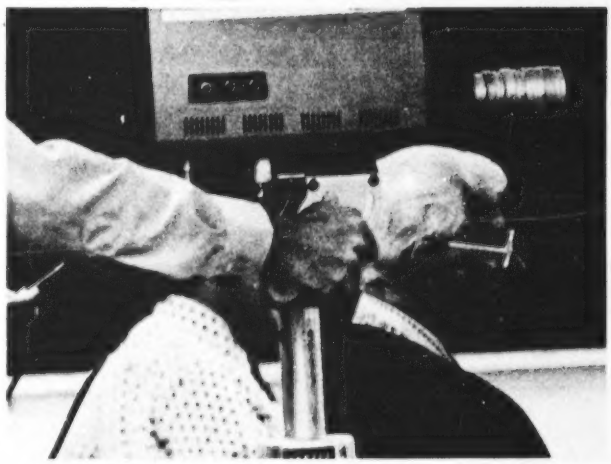
Educational Leadership Appraisal: A New Look at Performance And Potential



Those who took part in arranging for Allan Ellis to discuss the Educational Leadership Appraisal (ELA™) concept at Summer Institute '74 were gratified, but not at all surprised, at the intensity of interest his presentation evoked. Participants who attended Dr. Ellis' workshop-discussions were prompt to concede that their barrages of questions drew his meetings well beyond their alloted time and that it was with some reluctance that participants allowed him to break away to meet other groups.

This interest in ELA, on both professional and personal levels, was expected. Institutions and their staffs, in education and elsewhere, have for years pondered and attempted to answer the questions: what are the qualities that make a leader? how do you identify and assess these qualities? how can you develop them? In the business world the question has been: what kinds of people are successful in executive positions? In education, where "success" is more difficult to define, school systems have nevertheless continued to search for a systematic means of identifying the components and patterns of administrative leadership.

More particularly, participants in the Nova Ed. D. Program, along with the program's staff, have a special interest in such questions as whether or not the development of an educational leader is a specifiable process, whether it can be controlled — and whether a school administrator can be educated to leadership in a deliberate, replicable manner.

It is not yet known whether ELA will provide the answers to these latter questions. But Nova believes, with Dr. Ellis, that ELA offers a rational, systematic approach to the assessment of school administrators at all levels, an approach which may well have national implications for the betterment of education. We believe, too, that ELA can provide data that will enable us to optimize the National Ed.D. Program, and to identify components and content of the program that will best foster the development of leadership in school administration.

For these reasons—and especially because the National Ed.D. Program addresses itself to the interests and concerns of those school administrators who seek and exercise leadership in the public school systems—ELA will be used with all entering Group II participants as a normal component of the Ed.D. Program. The aim of this report, therefore, is to inform readers of the *Gazette* about this important venture: to explain what ELA is, how it works, and what it is expected to mean for the program, its participants, and the educational community.

ELA—What It Is

The Educational Leadership Appraisal system was developed for Nova University's National Ed. D. Program by Educational Research Corporation, Watertown, Massachusetts, of which Dr. Ellis is president. It is based in part on

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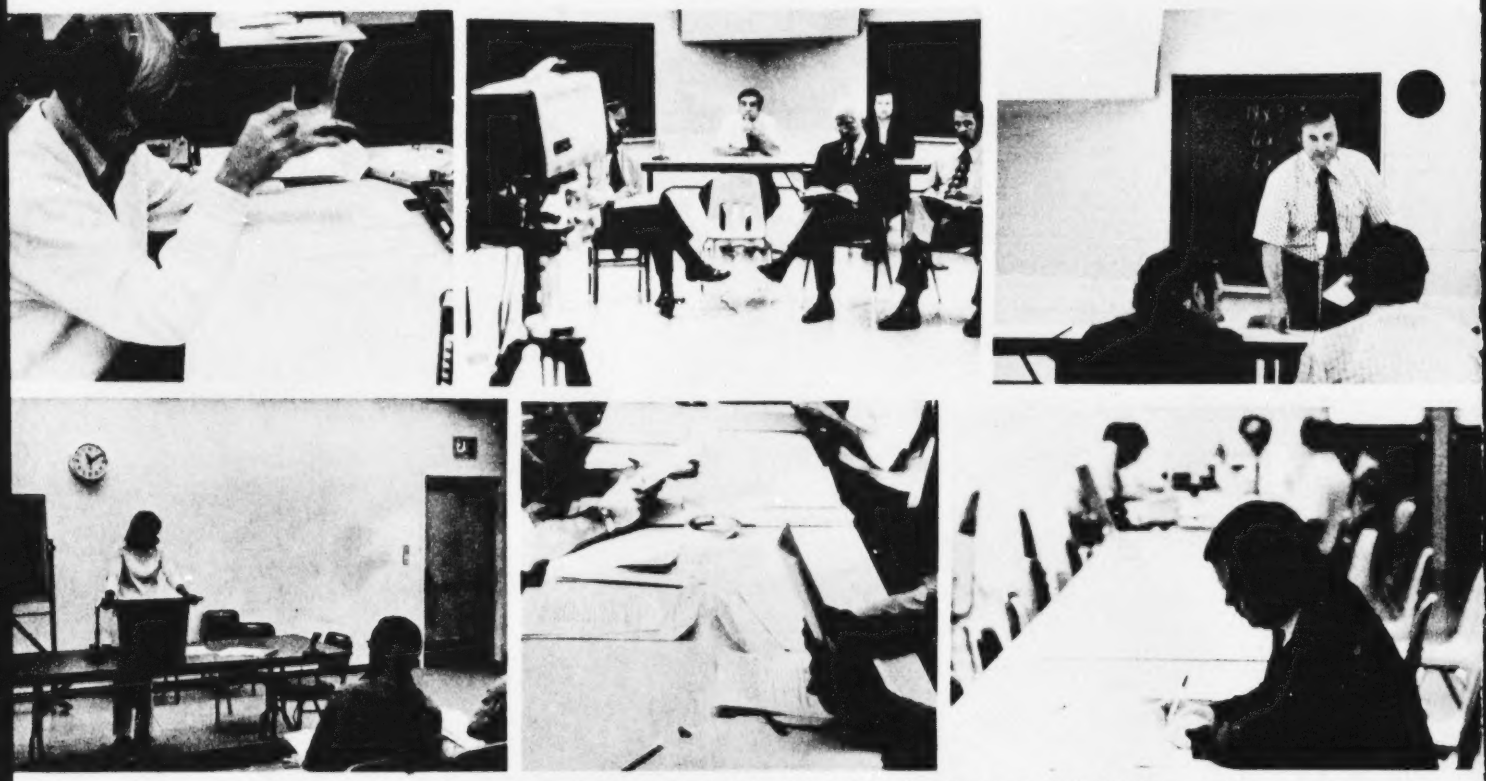


Performance-based, ELA examines and assesses leadership behavior through individual exercises... group exercises... simulations... role-playing... analyses problems... writing and speaking assignments.

the Gatekeepers' Gazette

About the persons, places and things that are Nova University's National Ed.D. Program for Educational Leaders.

Donald P. Mitchell
Director

S. O. Kaylin
Associate in Practicums

Gerald Sroufe
Director of Instruction

Murray Heyert
Associate in Publications

techniques that have been successfully employed in government and industry for two decades. Unlike the conventional techniques of supervisor's ratings, personal interviews, and pencil-and-paper examinations, ELA is a performance-based procedure for the observation and assessment of leadership behavior. It focuses on potential to exercise leadership in an administrative position within a school system, appraising the administrator along twenty-three Leadership Dimensions, grouped into the broader categories of Management and Organization, Communication, Problem Solving, Task Orientation, and Interpersonal Qualities. These twenty-three dimensions have been selected as encompassing the aptitudes, abilities, competencies, and qualities demanded by the school administrator's job.

Behavior along the Leadership Dimensions is elicited through a set of individual and group exercises, simulations, role-playing tasks, analysis problems, interviews, and writing and speaking assignments that approximate the problems, issues, and challenges encountered by today's school administrator. Appraisal begins with the systematic collection of the elicited behavior, accomplished at a full-day session at which participants are videotaped as they work their way through the various assignments. To these tapes is added written material produced by the participant both at home and at a previous day-long session. Then a team of appraisers at the Boston headquarters of Educational Research Corporation studies the tapes and written materials to produce a Behavior Inventory — a listing, by Leadership Dimensions,

Leadership Dimensions in ELA

Management and Organization

Planning and Organization—Effectiveness in planning and organizing own activities and those of staff.

Management Control—The appreciation of needs for controls and the ability to maintain controls over processes.

Use of Delegation—The ability to use subordinates, colleagues, and superiors effectively and to understand when a decision can best be made.

Communication

Written Communication Skills—The ability to write a readable, persuasive document that conceptualizes issues and problems, is complete, and is appropriate for the intended audience.

Oral Communication Skills—The ability to respond to questions in public, think clearly on one's feet, think behind questions, be articulate in defense of programs, define missions, explain complex issues, deal with a problem in public without preparation, and relate to all levels of audiences.

Problem Solving

Problem Analysis—The ability to read or listen and pick out critical information or issues underlying the material; to seek out pertinent data; to weigh alternatives and their consequences.

Political Analysis—The ability to perceive critical features of the environment such as power structure, principal players, special interests of individuals and groups; to be aware of constraints on ability to function; to formulate alternatives for action and bases for compromise that reflect realistic expectations, i.e., a sense of what is do-able.

Judgment—The ability to reach logical conclusions based on the evidence at hand.

Risk Taking—The extent to which calculated risks are taken based on sound judgment.

Creativity—The ability to come up with imaginative solutions in management situations.

Knowledge of Education—The extent of knowledge and understanding of fundamental as well as current educational principles and issues.

Task Orientation (Alone)

Tenacity—The tendency to stay with a problem or line of thought until the matter is settled.

Initiative—Active efforts to influence events rather than passive acceptance.

Stress Tolerance—Stability of performance under conditions of pressure, opposition, and uncertainty.

Energy—The ability to sustain a high level of work activity.

Task Orientation (With Others)

Group Leadership—Effectiveness in bringing a group to accomplish a task.

Individual Leadership—Ability to motivate individuals on a one-to-one basis to accomplish a task.

Adaptability—The ability to modify behavioral style and management approach to reach a goal.

Decisiveness—Readiness to make decisions and to render judgment.

Interpersonal Qualities

Impact—The ability to create a good first impression, to command attention and respect, to show an air of confidence, and to achieve personal recognition.

Flexibility—Being receptive to new ideas or arguments.

Perceptiveness—Skill in perceiving minimal cues in the behavior of others.

Empathy—The ability to identify with, and consider, the feelings, thought, and attitudes of another.

TV camera watches participant at simulated news conference, records behavior for analysis by ERC appraisers.

of all relative behavior exhibited by the person being assessed. This inventory provides, in turn, the basis for an overall Performance Analysis conducted by an augmented team of appraisers.

From this analysis the appraisal team produces concensus ratings and descriptions, which the senior appraiser then incorporates into an extensive written statement, or Leadership Profile, depicting and characterizing the candidate's performance on the components of the ELA system.

It should be evident that ELA is a comprehensive system that required substantial funds for development. All the costs incurred in ELA's development have been paid for out of operating funds by Nova's National Ed. D. Program. Included in these costs, which total over $125,000 to date, have been those for a full-scale four-month field test of the system, appraising approximately 100 participants from the Program's Chicago; Richmond, Virginia; Philadelphia; and Fairfield, California clusters — school administrators whose positions range from assistant principals to superintendents of schools. The results of these tests have satisfied the staffs of both the Nova Ed. D. Program and Educational Research Corporation that the ELA system affords the requisite

degree of value, veracity, and the freedom from minority group bias to warrant its use as a component of the Ed.D. Program.

Leadership Dimensions in ELA

Those participants who attended Dr. Ellis' presentations during the Summer Institute will recall the heated debate and discussion that arose from efforts of the group to develop a useable list of qualities and characteristics that could be termed Leadership Dimensions. Typically, the lists that appeared on the blackboard as the various suggestions were recorded ranged from "management skills" to "empathy," from "communication skills" to "honesty." In the process of developing such a list, participants found themselves wrestling with questions of overlap, vagueness, redundancy, and semantics, as well as the validity, if any, of the suggested dimensions. While there was debate about the substance of the list, there was, nevertheless, agreement that a useful list could be developed, given time, experience, and an acute perception of the special demands of the school administrator's job.

These, in fact, were the elements that were drawn upon in the process of developing the twenty-three Leadership Dimensions that constitute the first of ELA's several system components. Creating the list involved a process of repeated cut-and-try, using a multiplicity of recommendations from school administrators, interspersed with critical scrutiny, substitutions, re-examination, and re-listing. In addition to the work by the Nova and ERC staffs, the process entailed the collaboration of a number of experts, including, Gregory Anrig, Commissioner of Education for the Commonwealth

Exercises and Beh

The candidate's behavior along the Leadership Dimensions in the accompanying list on page 3 is elicited through the series of individual and group exercises, simulations, role-playing tasks, problem analyses, and interviews described here in abridged form.

Administrative Action Exercise—Many critical problems and challenges of an upper-middle-level administrator are simulated in this exercise wherein the participant is asked to deal with the accumulated notes, memoranda, letters, requests, and other pending action items that confront him as he takes over a new position as Area Administrator. The issues represented by the 30 items in this exercise cover the range from day-to-day internal management problems to questions of policy and planning. In dealing with these issues the participant must make decisions, delegate responsibility, write letters, assign work, plan, organize, and schedule.

Creativity Exercise—The participant is presented with a proposal that would affect every classroom in the school district. He or she is then asked to provide creative solutions/actions regarding the proposal.

Analysis Problem/Written Presentation—The participant is given a rather complex proposal regarding a pilot program for a school district. The participant must explain this proposal by four separate letters to the students, faculty, administration, and Advisory Board.

(During the two-week period between Days 1 and 2 of ELA, the participant creates an extensive experimental project to explore new methods of school administration. This exercise in administrative innovation forms the basis of the separate but related exercises presented in the following four descriptions.)

Individual Oral Presentation—Based on an outline of the proposed project, the participant delivers a prepared speech designed to present, concisely and persuasively, the project's critical features and establish its priority and relevance.

Question and Answer Period—Simulating the atmosphere and pressures of an unscheduled press conference, this exercise calls on the participant to answer questions and respond to challenges "on his feet" concerning his project and its implications.

Leaderless Group Discussion—Unassigned Roles—Six participants, all of whom have undergone the previous exercises, meet

Role playing: simulated city council meeting stages inter-department bargaining for available funds.

avior Simulations

to determine which proposal, if any, is clearly superior and worthy of funding or, failing that, whether they can collectively combine features of the various proposals to create a new, eminently fundable and worthwhile project.

Writing Exercise—The participant writes a full proposal for his project including rationale, description, management plan, budget, required resources, objectives, evaluation procedures, relevant contingencies, and the like.

Analysis Problem/Oral Presentation—The participant is given all of the data of a school program that had been collected by his predecessor. The participant is to analyze the data, provide an outline of his/her evaluation of the program and recommendations for its future operation. Upon submitting this outline he/she will make a ten minute oral presentation of the analysis to the school board and answer any of their questions.

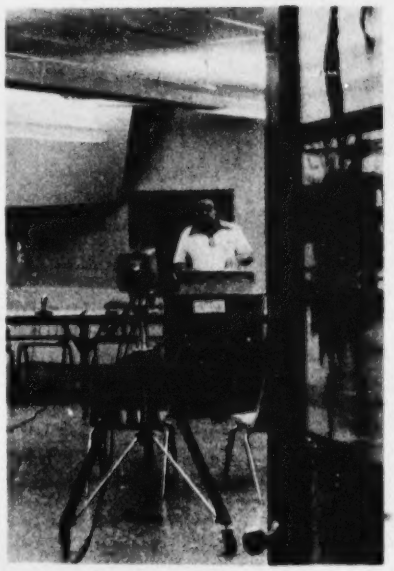
Individual Fact Finding/Decision Making Problem—Participants are presented with a problem situation and asked to determine its cause or causes. They may ask questions of a resource person who answers only those questions asked. At the end of the day the participants are asked to develop their conclusions based on the information acquired.

Leaderless Group Discussion—Assigned Roles—The city council is meeting to allocate a one-million dollar federal grant for capital improvement. Each member of the council (participants) has been briefed by a major department head, *e.g.*, streets, fire, sanitation, and is instructed to try to get as much money as possible for the department. The council must allocate the money in the time allowed. The exercise provides participants with a choice of projects to back and the opportunity to bargain and trade off projects for support.

Observation/Judgment Exercise—For 20 minutes the participant views a video tape of a committee meeting. The purpose of the committee is to make recommendations to the school board on a controversial subject. The participant acts as a newly-appointed Area Administrator who desires a favorable recommendation from the committee. After viewing the tape the participant is asked questions regarding his future actions toward members of the committee and his future role with the committee.

of Massachusetts; Medill Bair, Executive Director, EDCO, Inc.; and Mark Shedd, Commissioner of Education for the State of Connecticut, working together and separately over many weeks. From this cooperative effort and cross-criticism came a list that Nova, Educational Research Corporation, and the consulting team could agree upon as encompassing the spectrum of qualities and attributes required of educational leaders in a modern school setting. These Leadership Dimensions are listed and defined in the panel on page 3.

Although the developers of these Leadership Dimensions are satisfied that the list represents our best present understanding of the skills and aptitudes associated with leadership, they recognize that future experience with ELA may indicate the need for expanding that list. The structure of the ELA system has therefore been kept open to the insertion of additional dimensions, such as "moral reasoning," "need for achievement," "range of interests," and "carreer expectations," should the need arise.

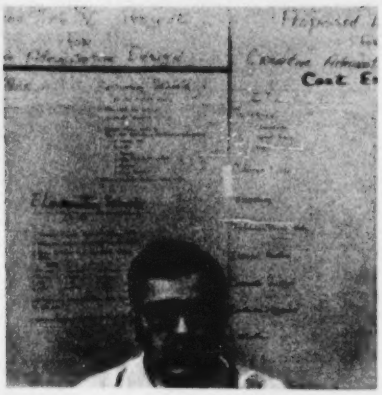


Alone with the video recorder, participant delivers a ten-minute speech to demonstrate oral communication skills, audience impact.

Exercises and Behavior Simulations

One of the several characterizing features of the ELA system is the use of situational techniques to approximate the problems and challenges faced by the administrator in his job setting. ELA concentrates on the assessment of on-the-job behavior rather than the application of some theoretical set of criteria.

For the development of exercises that would provide authentic simulation of job problems, appropriately refined and organized to elicit leadership behavior, Educational Research Corporation drew upon the expertise of Developmental Dimensions, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, an international pioneer in the use of

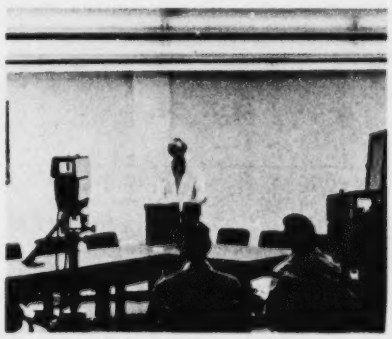


Persuasion: wall chart is used by participant to help make his point.

this technique in government and industry. The various exercises and simulations employed in the ELA system are described in brief on pages 4 and 5. The accompanying Dimension/Exercise Matrix shows the dimensions measured by each of the exercises. As the matrix indicates, each of the Leadership Dimensions is measured via several exercises or simulations, providing a broader perspective than could be obtained from a one-to-one correspondence of exercise and dimension, and eliminating the danger of yes/no appraisals that could result from an attempt to assess a behavior from a single exercise.

Administration of these exercises in ELA's present mode is a two-day process. Participants first go through one day of written exercises: the administrative action exercise, creativity problem, and the writing exercise. During that day they are given two take-home assignments: preparation of the oral presentation and completion of the Background Information Form. Two weeks later they go through a second day of exercises: the two leaderless group discussions, two speeches, the fact-finding exercise, the staffing analysis problem, the simulated press conference, and the analysis of a community task force meeting.

Although the administration of the ELA exercises is described as a two-day process, in reality these exercises are of a range and substance that would normally be expected to require three working days for completion. They have been intentionally crammed into two days in order to create a non-leisure situation that compels the participant to keep several problems in mind as he works. The designers of the exercises have recognized that most participants will be sufficiently sophisticated to guess the kinds of responses looked for by the observers. By being forced to work under time pressure they are thus deprived of opportunities to weigh responses in favor of what they believe the approved behavior to be.



Can the administrator sell his project? The ELA appraisal team in Boston will get some or all of the answers on the video tapes.

ELA in the Ed. D. Program

ELA has been designed to elicit information about leadership qualities and the patterns of leadership behavior that until now has been unavailable to either the educational community or to those institutions of higher learning engaged in the professional training of educators. It is anticipated that ELA will become a rich source of data that can be utilized nationally by school systems for effective management staffing, staff development, and job assignment, and by university graduate schools for the development of programs leading to management roles in public education.

For participants in the National Ed. D. Program, ELA is expected to provide information on leadership potential, competencies, strengths, and weaknesses that will enable both participants and the Nova instructional staff to identify development needs. In the case of the approximately one-hundred current participants who took part in the field testing program, Performance Analyses will serve for self-assessment only and will not at any time enter the participant's Nova file. For future clusters, ELA will also be used to aid lecturers and others in providing the appropriate instructional components to meet the revealed needs of participants. The incorporation of ELA into the National Ed. D. Program will thus afford participants an additional instrument for improving competencies and is consistent with the Program's purposes — improving education by improving the leadership skills of school managers.

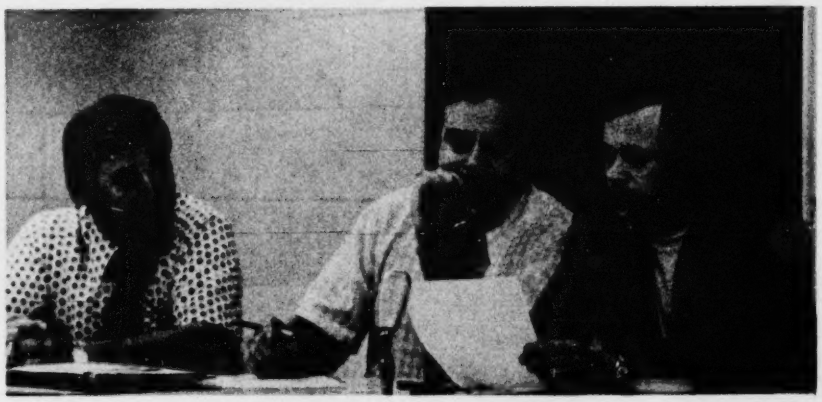
Decisions regarding the when and how of inserting ELA into the National Ed. D. Program have been made on the basis of two considerations. If we view ELA as a diagnostic and competency-

Time pressure is part of the ELA process. ERC observers keep exercises on tight schedule.

identification mechanism, it becomes evident that the process should be applied early if it is to have value for the participant. It is only through early appraisal that the participant will be enabled to draw upon the full range of developmental and remedial opportunities offered during the three years of the Program.

The second consideration relates to economics. We have pointed out earlier that all developmental

(continued on p. 8)



Group exercise finds the participant who knows how to influence friends and opponents.

Dimension/Exercise Matrix

Dimension/Exercise Matrix demonstrates graphically the application of the various exercises and simulations to the measurement of behavior along each of the twenty-three dimensions. Within the cells of the matrix a ★★ means it is a primary function of the exercise to measure the indicated dimension; a ★ means it is a secondary function of that exercise.

Dimension \ Exercise	Administrative Action Exercise	Creativity Exercise	Analysis Problem/Written Presentation	Admin.-Individual Oral Presentation	Admin.-Question and Answer Period	Admin.-Leaderless Group Discussion/Unassigned Role	Admin.-Writing Exercise	Analysis Problem/Oral Presentation	Individual Fact Finding/Decision Making Problem	Leaderless Group Discussion/Assigned Role	Observation/Judgment Exercise	Background Interview	
Planning and Organization	★★		★	★★			★★	★	★	★		★	Management and Organization
Management Control	★★											★★	
Use of Delegation	★★											★★	
Written Communication Skills	★★		★★				★★	★	★		★	★	Communication
Oral Communication Skills				★★	★★	★★		★★		★★			
Problem Analysis	★★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★★	★★	★	★		Problem Solving
Political Analysis	★★		★★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★★		
Judgment	★★	★		★	★	★	★	★★	★★	★	★		
Risk Taking	★★			★				★	★	★	★	★	
Creativity	★	★★		★			★	★			★	★★	
Knowledge of Education												★★	
Tenacity					★	★★				★★		★	Task Orientation (Alone)
Initiative	★★					★★				★★		★	
Stress Tolerance				★	★★	★		★		★★		★	
Energy				★		★		★		★		★★	
Group Leadership						★★				★★	★★		Task Orientation (With Others)
Individual Leadership	★★										★		
Adaptability	★		★★	★	★	★				★★	★★		
Decisiveness	★★			★		★		★		★			
Impact	★			★★		★				★			Interpersonal Qualities
Flexibility	★					★				★			
Perceptiveness	★			★	★	★				★★	★★		
Empathy	★★		★★	★	★	★		★		★	★★		

costs of ELA have been borne by the Ed. D. Program; implementation costs will also be paid for out of operating funds. Thus, the need to keep application costs within manageable limits demands that appraisals be conducted on a cluster, rather than an individual, basis.

For both these reasons the consensus of the Program's administration is that the earliest practical time to institute ELA would be concurrently with the entry of Group II clusters. While there are no plans for applying ELA to clusters already in operation, ERC will consider scheduling appraisals for groups of participants willing to form *ad hoc* clusters and to meet at a specified location for the two days needed for the exercises and simulations.

Since the costs of administering an appraisal program are not included within the tuition structure for currently operating clusters, those presently enrolled participants who may wish to utilize the ELA process must also be prepared to incur the costs that ERC would charge for this additional service.

Apart from its use as an instrument for assessment of participating individuals, what can ELA contribute to the National Ed. D. Program? Judging from the results of our pilot testing with four clusters, referred to above, we expect that ELA will enable us to generate an important body of statistical data that will point directions for modifying or adding to the program content, or altering the emphasis placed on the various components of the program in ways that will extend the Program's capabilities for developing leadership skills.

The full potential of ELA — for assessment, as an aid in leadership development, and in performance evaluation — is yet to be explored. We anticipate, however, that it will provide an additional resource — and one unique to the Nova Ed. D. Program — for the betterment of education and of educators.